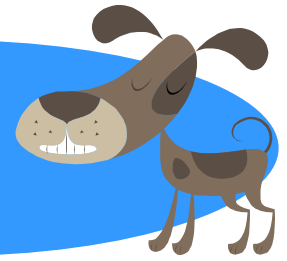


# Gimme Shelter

## News from the Loudoun County Animal Shelter

Loudoun County  
Department of  
Animal Care &  
Control



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## Volunteer Programs

Everywhere you look at the Animal Shelter, you see hardworking, caring people in red and green shirts doing all sorts of wonderful things. Who are they? They are the Department's amazing volunteers, and they are doing more than ever to make life better for the animals at the shelter and in the community.

Launched last Fall, the **Volunteer Apprentice** program has made teens and young adults a part of the everyday operations of the Department. Apprentice volunteers are kids ages 10-15 who donate service along with their parent or guardian. There are currently 16 apprentice/mentor pairs active in the program, and many more that are in the orientation and training process. These young volunteers do everything with their adult volunteer, including dog walking, cat cuddling, and web photography. And, when they turn 16, they will be all ready to be full fledged independent volunteers!

Volunteers are also learning more about animal behavior with the launch of the **Volunteer Clicker Training** program. Volunteers enrolled in this course are learning the basics of positive reinforcement training for dogs and how they can apply it to their work at the shelter. Five volunteers completed the first course, and 11 volunteers are currently enrolled, making for lots of happy, well behaved dogs on the adoption floor!

Volunteers have also been integral in helping Department staff with the new dog licensing procedures by helping to stuff envelopes and other administrative tasks. Volunteers are also active in the community by attending special events such as Furry Friday and other adoption days.

So if you see someone in a Volunteer t-shirt, be sure to thank them for giving of their time to help animals in need!

## Cats Make Happy Hearts

February is American Heart Month, and cat owners have something to celebrate. According to a 2008 study, cat owners are less likely to die of a heart attack and other cardiovascular diseases than people who have never had a pet cat. People who never had a pet cat were 40% more likely to die of a heart attack over the 20-year study period than those who had owned a cat at some point in their lives. They were also 30% more likely to die of any cardiovascular disease. Other studies have shown that the

simple act of stroking a cat can reduce blood pressure and relieve physical symptoms of stress.

So if you are looking for a way to make your heart happy, why not adopt a cat? Cats are the most popular pet in the country, outranking even dogs. They are laid back and easy going, and do not require as much daily maintenance as dogs. There are lots of wonderful cats looking for new homes at the shelter—come visit them today!



### How Can I Volunteer?

It's easy! Just visit [www.loudoun.gov/animals](http://www.loudoun.gov/animals) and click on "Volunteers" on the left hand side. Complete a brief application, and you'll receive an invitation to the next volunteer orientation.

After orientation, new volunteers are teamed up with an experienced volunteer for 4 hours of shadowing. Once this is complete, new volunteers are able to schedule themselves to begin working!

Volunteers are asked to complete a minimum of 2 hours a week of service in order to remain active.

We hope you join us!



Bella is an 8 year old female, brown tabby, looking for a new home!

## Shelter Cats Go Soft

When you walk into the cat adoption room at the Loudoun County Animal Shelter, you might notice something strange. On your left is a handsome red tabby... with purple claws? You think you must be seeing things, so you look to your right. There is a playful gray kitten stretching himself... and showing off bright orange nails! Has the Animal Shelter started giving kitty manicures? Well, sort of. Loudoun's shelter kitties are getting a makeover to make them even better pets!

Some cats at the Animal Shelter are wearing vinyl caps that cover their claws and prevent them from doing damage when they scratch. The caps slip right over the nail and are adhered with a non-toxic glue. Most cats tolerate the application very well, and don't even notice that they are wearing them.

Once applied, the caps stay on for approximately 4-6 weeks. The cat still has all the functionality of his paws - claws can

extend and retract, and he can scratch and dig, without tearing furniture or causing accidental scratches on people. The caps fall off as the nails grow, and do not cause any damage to the nails.

Nail caps are an economical, humane alternative to having a cat declawed. Declawing is a painful and sometimes debilitating procedure that can possibly lead to behavior problems such as housesoiling and biting. By covering the nails, you are alleviating any concerns that come with scratching while also letting kitty continue to feel and behave normally.

If you'd like to learn more about nail caps, come check them out on the Shelter's model felines. We'll also be happy to teach you how to apply caps to your own cats. Come see our cats today!



## Employee of the Month

February's Employee of the month is a dedicated team of Animal Care Technicians: **Angelica Robinson, Airken Abulizi, Kathy Baugher, and Kelly Burnell.**

This group is being recognized for their hard work in cleaning and maintaining both the indoor and outdoor animal care areas of the shelter. Specifically, staff at all levels expressed their appreciation of the extra effort they displayed when cleaning the shelter on a recent Sunday. Their initiative and extra effort to clean the

animal areas of the shelter to such a high level is a great example of their commitment and pride. This team sets an example for everyone in the Department in their commitment to the health and well being of the animals in their care.

**Thank you for all you do!**

**Congratulations Team!**



## What We're Up To...

### Furry Fridays

Have you been to Furry Friday yet? You've got two chances to come in March! Furry Friday is our monthly adoption event at the Sterling Community Center, located at 120 Enterprise St. in Sterling. We'll be there with wonderful animals looking for new homes on **Friday, March 6** and **Friday, March 20**, from **5:00-7:00pm**. Hope to see you there!

### Got Turtles?

The Animal Shelter has two Red-eared Slider turtles currently looking for new homes! Loving nicknamed Mr. & Mrs. Slowsky, they were surrendered by their owners who could no longer afford to keep them. They are very cute and have personality plus! If you've thought of getting a pair of turtles as pets, now is your chance to adopt. Come visit the Slowskys today!

